

Chapter 38
Historic District Regulations
Adopted September 5, 2024

38-1 Authority; title; purpose:

1. Authority. Pursuant to the authority vested in the Historic District Commission (“the HDC”), by the voters of the Town of Hillsborough and in conformance with the provisions of RSA 674:45, 674:46 and 674:46-a as amended, the HDC hereby adopts the following regulations governing renovation or new construction work within the Historic District of the Town of Hillsborough, NH (“the District”).
2. Title. These regulations shall be known as the “Town of Hillsborough Historic District Regulations” and hereafter referred to as “these regulations”.
3. Purpose. These regulations are intended to help the residents of the District and the members of the HDC preserve the visual qualities of the District in a fair and consistent manner.

38-2 Waivers

The HDC shall have the discretion to waive any condition contained in these Regulations for good cause shown.

A waiver of these Regulations required the HDC to find each of the following conditions:

- a. No decrease in value of surrounding properties would suffer.
- b. Granting the waiver would not be contrary to the public interest.
- c. By granting the waiver substantial justice would be done.
- d. Granting the waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the regulations.
- e. Granting the waiver would not be detrimental to the character, environment, scenic value or general welfare of the District.

38-3 Building Exterior

These regulations recognize that the District is comprised of buildings that span the time from 1769 to 1911. Each building is distinctly different and conveys both its own history and a piece of the story of Hillsborough. Similarly, alterations to a single building impact not only the architectural character of that structure but the overall character and integrity of the entire District.

38-4 Walls and Trim

The buildings in the Hillsborough Historic District are defined in large part by the prevalence of wood, used for clapboards, shingles, and trim. To retain this character, it is critical that painted wooden clapboards which match those existing in terms of exposed width, continue to be the material used when replacing deteriorated clapboard siding. These details must be consistent.

Alternative siding such as vinyl may be considered at the Board's discretion, but in all cases extreme attention will be given to the trim details around windows and doors and at the corners,

facia and eaves. These details must be consistent with the architectural style of the building.

Attention shall be paid on older buildings to possible serious moisture problems in covering old clapboards with alternative siding. Wooden shingles or clapboards, shiplap, and board & batten are suitable exterior coverings for outbuildings: in general, the existing material shall be matched in kind.

1. Exterior trim, such as corner boards, door and window casings, cornices, and door and gable pediments play a critical role in the appearance and proportions of a building. All trim that contributes to the historic character of a building shall be retained and preserved.
2. When it is necessary to replace all or portions of such features, they shall be replaced to match that which has been removed, in terms of material, design and placement.
3. As much of the original features as possible shall be repaired rather than replaced. If using the same kind of material that is not technically feasible, a compatible material may be considered.
4. It is not appropriate to install trim that relates to an earlier period or different style than the building (See Architectural Style section 38-18)

38-5 Roofs

Roofs are an important design element of historic buildings. The shape of an existing historic roof shall not be altered. If asphalt shingles are selected, a dark color is preferable.

38-6 Chimneys

Chimneys are an important feature of historic buildings and shall be retained. Chimneys in poor condition shall be rebuilt, rather than removed.

1. If a missing chimney is to be rebuilt, the reconstructed feature shall be:
 - a. appropriately sized, positioned and constructed to appear historically functional. Historic photographs might assist in the design.
 - b. If a new chimney is to be built, it shall be brick or stone and situated in a location appropriate to the historic design and function of the building.

38-7 Television antennae, satellite dishes, and other objects affixed to the roof (“the Items”)

1. The Items shall be installed at the rear, or a minimally visible slope of a roof and be of the smallest size practical.
2. The visual impact of electrical wires and meters shall be minimized where possible,
3. Wires shall be buried for weather as well as aesthetics.
4. Meters shall not be placed on the primary facade of a building but shall be located so as not to limit access by utility service personnel.

38-8 Solar Collection Systems

Solar Collection Systems shall be installed per the requirements stated in the Zoning Ordinance, “Article XIX Solar Collection System Ordinance section 229-137 Solar Collection Systems in the Historic District”.

38-9 Windows

Windows, like trim details, are an essential part of the design of any building. Most of the windows in the Historic District buildings are regularly spaced and of similar size. The sash is universally double hung, with a wide range of lights, depending on the style and period.

1. Replacement windows shall follow
 - a. The building's historic fenestration pattern, including opening, size, placement, type of sash and generous muntin profile.
 - b. Replacement lights shall not be smaller, or of an earlier period, than is appropriate for the building.
 - c. It should be noted that small paned windows were often replaced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with 2 over 2 or 2 over 1 sash. In such cases, reverting to smaller paned sash is neither necessary, nor always recommended, while restoring a building. Historic photographs available at the Historical Society and Social Library are helpful in determining the appearance of historic sash and at what date the replacement sash was installed.
 - d. Snap-in interior muntins are not recommended unless paired with exterior muntin when remodeling an historically significant building.
 - e. Exterior storm windows are appropriate for historic buildings, but their meeting rails shall line up with the primary sash and the tops match the shape of the primary sash. Storms shall be painted the color of the primary sash: if a factory finish is used, its color shall approximate the color of the primary sash.
2. Window air conditioners are allowed, preferably in an inconspicuous location and preferably removed on a seasonal basis.

38-10 Blinds

If authentic exterior wood blinds (shutters) have remained with the building, they shall be maintained and used upon discretion of the property owner. Exterior blinds of metal or synthetic materials are not recommended as substitutes, since they are often not sized properly, and their appearance is not authentic.

38-11 Entrances and Porches

Entrances are usually the focal point of the buildings in the Historic District and an integral component of design. Features such as fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, entablatures, and granite steps shall be retained at all costs.

1. If replacement due to deterioration is necessary, the features shall be faithfully replicated. If the entrance to a barn is modified, the size and location of the historic opening shall remain clearly apparent. Storms and screens shall be painted to match doors and compliment the primary door in design.
2. Most of the porches in the District are on secondary elevations and many were added after the building was constructed. However, they have since become an integral part of the building's history and shall be maintained and preserved. Features, such as balusters, posts or balustrades, shall be carefully replicated when replacement is necessary.
3. When an open porch is to be screened, the screens and frames shall be installed behind the posts and railing, so that the historic details remain fully visible to the public view.

38-12 New Additions to Existing Buildings

In the design of an addition to an historic building, the scale, size and materials of the addition shall neither overwhelm the historic building nor obscure its significant historic materials and features.

1. Additions shall be placed onto secondary elevations; and the preferred location is usually on the rear or an inconspicuous side.
2. If the buildings consist of a main house, an ell and an attached barn, the proportional relationship shall not be lost while building an addition.
3. A traditional design and traditional materials will usually be most suitable for an addition within the District.
4. Roof shapes, height, materials, fenestration and doors are key design issues. They shall be compatible with the historic building and any previous addition.
5. Moldings and other details might be simplified in the addition, both to make clear a distinction between the old and new, and to keep the addition secondary to the historic building. A major addition will require a professional design with appropriate plans and elevations.

38-13 New Porches and Decks

Designs for new porches shall either follow an historic porch that has since been removed or be a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the building. Bear in mind that porches were often appended to earlier buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Closely spaced lattice is an appropriate screening method for the structure. Though pressure-treated lumber is recommended, all exposed sections shall be painted to match the trim or color of the building. New decks shall be located off secondary elevations and painted to match porch decks and building trim.

8-14 Ramps

Modifications to historic buildings for barrier-free access shall accommodate both the needs of disabled people and the historic characteristics of the building. Ramps shall be located so as not to obscure or cause the removal of historic features while still complying with ADA regulations.

Simple wooden or iron pipe railings are usually appropriate; exposed wooden elements shall be considered trim and painted to match the trim color of the building.

38-15 New Construction in the Historic District

As stated in other sections of these regulations, the District is an area which the townspeople have voted to designate as being unique because of its significance and place in American history.

1. Considerable detail has been provided to guide property owners with the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of their houses and buildings in a manner that will preserve and safeguard aesthetic, cultural and historic features of the District.
2. New buildings in the District are to be held to the standards of changes to existing buildings. Stylistic elements on new construction should be consistent with existing structures. (See appendix A)
3. It is expected that all new buildings in the Historic District will respect the fact that Hillsborough is a rural community whose architecture consists primarily of traditional shapes and that new structures will fit comfortably with these existing structures. Stylistic elements on new construction which do not relate to existing elements on historic buildings in the district shall generally be disallowed.
4. All new construction within the Historic District shall be designed with the goal of enhancing the appearance of existing buildings by being consistent with the buildings in terms of rhythm, siting, scale, architectural features and materials. The rich and varied styles and configurations of the existing buildings in the Historic District give the modern designer significant latitude to satisfy the requirements of both the new owner and the Historic District.

38-16 Siting

New structures shall be located to be consistent with the setbacks in the Table 3 “Setback Coverage and Building Height Requirements” in the Zoning Ordinance.

38-17 Scale

New structures shall be in harmony with the mass, scale and proportion of the buildings on the adjacent lots within the District.

38-18 Architectural Features

New structures shall not introduce architectural features that are inconsistent with other buildings in the area. The shape of the building, pitch of the roof, size of dormers, presentation of gables to or away from the street must be appropriate to the architectural styles of the District.

38-19 Windows and Doors

The size, shape and frequency of these openings shall be consistent with other buildings in the area. The predominant window in the District is a double hung window with true divided lights. These windows are available from many manufacturers with the most modern energy specifications. Roof windows (skylights) or casement windows are not usually appropriate for the Historic District (see Exteriors).

38-20 Siding and Trim

The predominant siding in the District is wood, mostly clapboard with some shingles used. Sidings such as vinyl may be considered at the Board's discretion but in all cases extreme attention will be given to the trim details around windows and doors and at the corners, fascia and eaves. These details must be consistent with other buildings in the District (see Exteriors).

38-21 Change to Existing Structures

Changes to existing structures shall be made in such a manner as to preserve the Historic District's distinctive character.

38-22 District Setting

The District's identity as an historic, rural village center depends, in large part, upon its roadside trees, stone walls, open space, vistas, road width, low lighting and the relationships of buildings to adjacent landscapes. Preserving these features is critical to maintaining the District's distinctive character. It is expected that each property owner will preserve and improve the aesthetic qualities of his/her property whether undeveloped or residential. This District setting section deals with existing, renovated and new construction in the residential area.

38-23 Stonewalls and Granite Features

Historical markers for existing property boundaries and granite site features, such as stone walls, mounting blocks, etc., shall be preserved.

New Hampshire State Law protects stonewalls when they are along a boundary line. The Commission will not regulate stone walls that are not boundary walls.

The existing boundary stone walls shall be retained in place and repaired as necessary. New free standing and/or retaining walls are to be constructed of unfinished rock and maintain a “dry stack” look. Walls may be veneered or wet laid if no mortar is visible. Rocks found in the area are the preferred material.

38-24 Fences

A fence or stone wall (“fencing”) is an architectural feature that should enhance the character of the house, street, and Historic District. Authentic reproductions are suitable, pleasant and enhance property values. Therefore, fencing in the District should be in keeping with the period of the buildings on the immediately adjacent lots.

38-25 Fencing Permit Requirements Include:

The proposed fencing must be clearly defined with photographs, sketches and/or drawings that depict the exact location and accurately represent nature/materials of the proposed fencing.

38-26 Fencing Type:

1. Incompatible connecting fencing along one or more property line(s) is prohibited. A fence along the front of a building shall continue with the same style of fencing as far as is visible from the public right of way. Gates shall be of the same style as the fence to which they are attached. Chain link, lattice, woven wood, board on board and stockade fencing are all inappropriate and not permitted without a waiver from the HDC.
2. In choosing the proper fence the following shall be considered:
 - a. Architectural period of the building
 - b. Existing fences in the neighborhood.
 - c. Height and style in relation to the building.
3. Picket fencing is considered appropriate but careful attention shall be given to the space between pickets (pales) to ensure uniformity.
4. Split Rail, Post and Rail, Post and Beam, and fencing constructed with granite posts & chain are considered appropriate provided they correspond with the period of the immediately adjacent building(s).
5. Fences shall not restrict the views of neighbors. The maximum height of fencing and gates along the street frontage is 4 feet

38-27 Relocation

Buildings shall be retained on their present sites whenever possible. Relocations shall be considered only as an alternative to demolition.

38-28 Demolition

It is expected that each property owner will maintain, preserve and improve the qualities of his/her property. Historically significant structures will be carefully evaluated and should be preserved whenever possible.

1. Demolition of any building or part of a building in the Historic District shall be allowed only when new construction would relate to the Historic District, and when all other requirements below are satisfied.
 - a. If a request for demolition is based on structural instability or deterioration, the HDC may require a technical report prepared by an architect or a registered professional engineer to support that conclusion.
 - b. An application for demolition shall be accompanied by complete plans for a new development proposed on the site.
 - c. A condition for approval of demolition shall be documentation by the owner of the building's elevations and architectural features.
 - d. Where public safety needs require the removal of part of a building or complex, the HDC may allow limited removal within structurally-sound construction and EPA/DES guidelines.
 - e. In reviewing the application package, the HDC may request reports and recommendations regarding the feasibility of the applicant's proposal from the planning board, fire chief, building inspector, health officer and other administrative officials who may possess information concerning the impact of the proposal on the Historic District. Summary of Procedures

38-29 Summary of Procedures

1. All applicants must complete a written application provided by the HDC. All information should be completed as accurately as possible, with drawings and examples included.
2. Applications should be submitted to the Building Department at Town Hall with all fees included. Fees for abutters notification is included and notifications will be made through registered mail.
3. A public hearing will be held to allow the Applicant to present the application to the HDC, for the HDC to ask questions of the Applicant, and for the public to make comments on the Application.
4. Upon a decision, the property owner will receive either a written certificate of approval or denial. The HDC will provide all reasons for approval or denial of an application.

38-30 Enforcement

1. RSA 674.50 In case of violation of any ordinance or regulation made under the authority conferred by RSA 674:46, the HDC shall notify the Code Enforcement Officer.

2. Cease and Desist Orders: Upon receipt of a notice of violation from the HDC, the Code Enforcement Officer has the authority to issue a cease-and-desist order against any violation of this title in conformance with the requirements of RSA 676:17.
3. Fines and penalties: Any person found to be in violation shall be subject to a civil penalty, costs and attorney's fees in accordance with the provisions of RSA 676:17 and RSA 676:17-a.